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Report of the High-level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development on its seventh session

(Monaco, 14-17 January 1997)

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I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

1. The seventh session of the High-level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development was held at Monaco from 14 to 17 January 1997, at the invitation of the Government of Monaco. Fourteen members of the Board attended: Maria Julia Alsogaray, Christina Amoako-Nuama, Birgitta Dahl, Abid Hussein, Jörg Imberger, Jacques Lesourne, Marcilio Marques Moreira, Laura Novoa, David Pearce, Qu Geping, Emil Salim, Suh Sang-Mok, Mostafa Tolba and Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker. Four members were unable to attend: Princess Basma Bint Talal, Nikolai Drozdov, David Hamburg and Maurice Strong. The curricula vitae of Board members are contained in annex II.

2. The officers elected at the fifth session for the 1996-1997 term (see E/CN.17/1996/31, para. 50), were Birgitta Dahl (Chairperson), Emil Salim (Vice-Chairperson) and Jörg Imberger (Rapporteur).

3. The session was opened by the Chairperson and the agenda (see annex I) was adopted. At the opening ceremony, Prince Albert of Monaco made a welcoming statement, emphasizing the importance that his country attached to sustainable development and reviewing Monaco's contribution to multilateral and bilateral agreements aimed at protecting the Mediterranean. The Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat read a message from the Secretary-General stressing that sustainable development was one of the greatest challenges facing the United Nations, that it could only be addressed through international cooperation, and that he relied on the Board for independent expert advice on promoting sustainable development in all countries.

4. The Chairperson made an introductory statement, noting that the session was to finalize the report which would constitute the Board's contribution to the 1997 special session of the General Assembly, building on the Board's work at its previous sessions. The Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development noted that the value of the Board's report would derive from the policy recommendations that it made, and that it would complement other reports being prepared by the Secretariat for the special session, notably those examining long-term trends in sustainable development and assessing global freshwater resources.

5. Ten experts in the three resource sectors (energy, transport and water) also participated in the session and contributed to the Board's discussions. They were Claude Fussler, Vice-President for Environment, Health and Safety, Dow Europe; Thomas Johansson, Director, Energy and Atmosphere Programme, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Christian Stoffaes, Direction de l'Economie, de la Prospective et de la Stratégie, Electricité de France; Steve Lennon, Research Manager, ESKOM, South Africa; Alberto Harth, Senior Adviser for Infrastructure, World Bank; Laurie Michaelis, Environment Directorate, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development; Jonas Rabinovitch, Senior Urban Development Adviser, UNDP; Lucien Chabason, Coordinator, United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan; René Coulomb, Administrateur Directeur-General, Lyonnaise des Eaux; and Gunilla Björkland of the Stockholm Environment Institute. The Board expressed

its appreciation to the experts for their generous and valuable contributions to its work.

6. Substantive services for the session were provided by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development.

7. The Board expressed its appreciation to the Government of Monaco for the excellent arrangements made for the session and the gracious hospitality extended to participants.

II. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

8. Discussions at the seventh session focused on the organization and contents of the report of the Board as a contribution to the 1997 review of progress in the implementation of the commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), as agreed at the Board's fifth session. The discussions focused on a draft report prepared by the Secretariat and the interim Rapporteur, David Pearce, on the basis of the Board's decisions at its fifth and sixth sessions and comments made by Board members on preliminary drafts. The Board also took into account the information and views provided by the experts mentioned above who participated in the session.

9. The Board noted that the Commission on Sustainable Development and the General Assembly at its special session were not expected to renegotiate Agenda 21, but would focus on accelerating the implementation of its recommendations. The Board agreed with that approach and adopted it for its own report.

10. The Board agreed that its report for the 1997 review should be short - about 20 pages - and that it should be forward-looking and positive in tone. As agreed at its fifth and sixth sessions, the Board reaffirmed that the report would focus on sustainable development in three critical sectors: energy, transport and water. For each sector, the Board examined policy measures for ensuring sustainable development, impediments to their application and policy packages that might overcome such impediments. The Board agreed that its recommendations should be practical and concrete with a view to moving the implementation of the UNCED process from commitments to action.

11. The Board emphasized that promoting sustainable development in all countries requires a strengthening of international cooperation, including increased official development assistance and technology transfer, in accordance with commitments made at UNCED and elsewhere. A primary element of sustainable development in energy, transport and water should be to ensure that everyone has access to clean energy, clean water and sanitation, and transportation services.

12. The Board agreed that strengthened incentives for sustainable energy, transport and water, which generally involve higher prices, must be complemented by measures to ensure that low-income people and communities have access to basic services.

13. The Board recognized that measures to promote sustainability are often opposed by influential groups that benefit from existing patterns of production and consumption. To overcome such obstacles, the Board considered ways to combine economic incentives with compensatory measures to ensure political feasibility as well as economic and social equity. The Board also noted that greater citizen participation in decision-making processes could also facilitate the acceptance of policies for sustainable development. Improving education and public information related to sustainable development was seen as essential to informed policy-making and implementation.

14. Detailed consideration of the issues mentioned above and the conclusions and recommendations of the Board are contained in the Board's report for the 1997 review, entitled "Critical issues and policies for sustainable development: energy, transport and water", which is before the Commission as an addendum to the present report (E/CN.17/1997/17/Add.1).

15. Several members of the Board proposed to undertake initiatives to promote wide dissemination of the Board's report.

III. FUTURE WORK

16. The Board agreed that it should meet again following the special session of the General Assembly in order to review its work and its contribution to the 1997 review of progress in the implementation of the commitments made at UNCED. Beyond that, its future work would depend on the decisions of the General Assembly concerning the continuing work of the United Nations in the field of sustainable development, and on the decision of the Secretary-General concerning the role of the Board.

17. In its report for the 1997 review, the Board noted that the globalization of trade and financial flows presented new challenges for sustainable development and had increased the need for international cooperation to ensure the effectiveness of national policies. The Board identified that issue as a possible topic for its future work.

Annex I

AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

2. Consideration of the draft report of the Board for the 1997 review.

3. Arrangements for launching and disseminating the report for the 1997 review.

4. Future work of the Board.

5. Adoption of the report of the seventh session.

Annex II

CURRICULA VITAE OF BOARD MEMBERS

Chairperson

Birgitta DAHL (Sweden). Speaker, Parliament of Sweden. Member, Executive Committee of the Social Democratic Party. Member, Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs. Former positions include Minister of Environment (1990-1991), Minister of Environment and Energy (1986-1990), Minister of Energy (1982-1986). Received professional education in Sweden (History and Political Science).

Vice-Chairperson

Emil SALIM (Indonesia). Member of the Economic Team of the President of Indonesia; member, People's Consultative Congress; member, Academy of Sciences, Indonesia. Former positions include Minister of State for Population and the Environment; President, Governing Council of UNEP; Professor in Economics, University of Indonesia. Received professional education in Indonesia and the United States of America (Economics). J. Paul Getty award (U.S. World Wild Life Fund). Author of Pemerataan Pendapatan and Perencanaan (1978); Pembangunan Berwawasan (1986).

Rapporteur

Jörg IMBERGER (Australia). Professor of Environmental Engineering, Director of the Centre for Environmental Fluid Dynamics and Chair of the Centre for Water Research, University of Western Australia. Currently Chair of the Western Australia Esturaine Research Foundation and Scientific Adviser to Earthwatch. Member, Australian Academy of Sciences. Past posts include various academic positions in Australia and abroad, and consultancies to many state and federal government bodies and private agencies. Recipient of various awards for contribution to environmental issues. Received professional education in Australia and the United States of America.

Members

Maria Julia ALSOGARAY (Argentina). Member of the National Cabinet; Secretary of the Secretariat for Natural Resources and Human Environment. Former positions include Vice-President, National Defense Commission of the National Chamber of Deputies; Member, Commission of Foreign Relations, National Defense, Science and Technology; National Congresswomen for the Unión del Centro Democrático, Buenos Aires; Delegate of Argentina to the Argentine-Uruguayan Economic Cooperation Agreement; Adviser in the delegation to the Latin American Free Trade Associations; and various positions in the private sector. Received professional education in Argentina.

Christina AMAOKO-NUAMA (Ghana). Minister for Environment, Science and Technology. Former positions include Minister for Environment; environmental consultant active in biodiversity conservation; member of Ghana National

Development Planning Commission. Held various academic positions. Received professional education in Ghana and Canada.

Her Highness Princess Basma BINT TALAL (Jordan). Founder of Queen Alia Fund for Social Development and Chairperson of its Board of Trustees; Chairperson of Arab Association of Women and Development; Chairperson, Jordanian National Committee for Women.

Nikolai DROZDOV (Russia). Environmental writer and Biologist. Associate Professor, Faculty of Geography, Moscow State University; presenter and producer of well-known Russian TV programme "In the world of animals" and other nature programmes. Took part in the UNESCO Man and Biosphere expedition to the Pacific islands of Tonga and Samoa. Author of 20 books and numerous research papers on biology, geography and nature conservation. Recipient of several international awards. Received professional education in the Russian Federation and Australia. Member of Explorers Club and New York Academy of Sciences.

David A. HAMBURG (United States of America). President, Carnegie Corporation of New York. Serves on the boards of the Rockefeller University, the Mount Sinai Medical Center, the American Museum of Natural History, the Johann Jacobs Foundation. Member, American Philosophical Society and American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Former positions include Professor and Chairman, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and Reed-Hodgson Professor of Human Biology, Stanford University; President of the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences; Director, Division of Health Policy Research and Education, and John D. MacArthur Professor of Health Policy, Harvard University; Chairman of the Board, American Association for Advancement of Science. Served as Chairman and member of several national science policy groups, including the President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology. Research interests and contributions include biological responses and adaptive behaviour, human aggression, biomedical and behavioural sciences, links between behaviour and health, and child and adolescent development. Received professional education in the United States. Author of Today's Children: Creating a Future for a Generation in Crisis.

Abid HUSSEIN (India). Formerly Ambassador to the United States. Currently Vice-Chairman, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies, Rajiv Gandhi Foundation.

Jacques LESOURNE (France). Professor, Conservatoire des Arts et Metiers. Former positions include Director, Le Monde; Founder, Society for Economics and Applied Mathematics; Leader, OECD Interfutures Project.

Marcilio Marques MOREIRA (Brazil). Director, Programme of Advanced International Studies, State University, Rio de Janeiro; Special Adviser to the Mayor of Rio de Janeiro and Senior International Advisor to Merrill Lynch; Member of the Advisory Boards of General Electric, South America, Hoechst-Brazil and American Bank Note-Brasil. Previous positions include Minister of Economy, Finance and Planning; Ambassador to the United States; Alternate Director, International Monetary Fund and InterAmerican Development Bank; Adviser to the Minister of Finance and member of the Board of the National Development Bank; several other high-level positions in academia, administration and private

sector. Member of the boards of various other institutions and professional organizations. Author and co-author of several books. Received professional education in Brazil and the United States of America.

Laura NOVOA (Chile). President, PARTICIPA (a Chilean non-governmental organization on education and democracy); member of the Council, PAZ CIUDADANA; member of the law firm Philippi, Yrarrazaval, Pulido and Langlois (mining and corporate matters); formerly responsible for public services in State mining companies; collaborated in the drafting of various bills; member of Commission on Truth and Reconciliation. Recipient of Keogh Award from New York University for distinguished public services. Received professional education in Chile and the United States of America (Law).

David PEARCE (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland). Professor of Environmental Economics, University College, London, and Director, Centre for Social and Economic Research on the Global Environment; Chairman, ECE Economic Group on Acid Rain; member, Scientific Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility. Previous positions include Personal Adviser to the Secretary of State for Environment, United Kingdom. Author, co-author or editor of many books on economics, environment, sustainable development; extensive international consultative experience. Received professional education in the United Kingdom.

QU Geping (China). Chairman, Environmental and Resource Protection Committee, National Peoples' Congress. Former positions include Vice-Chairman, Environmental Protection Commission, State Council Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, China. Head of Mission of China to UNEP. Received professional education (Engineering) in China and the United Kingdom. Author of numerous publications on environmental issues, including China's Environment and Development (1993); Studies on Environmental Services in China.

Maurice STRONG (Canada). Chairman, Environmental Capital Corporation; Senior Adviser to the President of the World Bank. Former positions include Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Hydro; Secretary-General, United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; Under-Secretary-General and Executive Coordinator, the United Nations Office for Emergency Operations in Africa; Director, United Nations Environment Programme; President and Chief Executive Officer, Petro-Canada; Chairman, Board of Governors, International Development Research Centre, Canada. Received professional education in Canada (Business). Recipient of numerous awards and honorary doctorates.

SUH Sang-Mok (Republic of Korea). Member, National Assembly; Chairman, Kangnam-gu A District Chapter, Seoul; President, Institute for Public Policy Studies. Previous positions include Minister, Ministry of Health and Welfare; Director-General, Policy Coordination Office, the Democratic Liberal Party; member of several National Assembly committees; Vice-President, Korean Development Institute; member, Pacific Board of Economists, Time Magazine; Senior Counsellor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Economic Planning Board of the Republic of Korea. Author of several books and articles. Received professional education in the United States.

Mostafa TOLBA (Egypt). Professor, Faculty of Science, Cairo University. President, ECOPAST - Centre for Environment and Cultural Heritage,

Washington, D.C.; President, International Centre for Environment and Development. Former positions include Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UNEP; Head, Egyptian delegation to the Stockholm Conference on Human Environment (1972). Received professional education in Egypt and the United Kingdom (Botany). Author of numerous papers on plant diseases, anti-fungal substances and physiology of micro-organisms and on the environment, including Sustainable Development: Constraints and Opportunities (1987).

Ernst Ulrich von WEIZSÄCKER (Germany). President, Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy, Science Centre, North-Rhine Westphalia. Member of the Club of Rome. Previous positions include Director, Institute for European Environment Policy; Director, United Nations Centre for Science and Technology for Development; President, University of Kassel, Germany; Chairman, Association of German scientists. Author of Ecological Tax Reform, Earth Policies; co-author of Factor Four: Doubling Wealth, Halving Resource Use (forthcoming).